



**Press Contact:**

Jasmyne Humble

Marketing and Communications

Telephone: 815.933.4559

Email: [jehumble@citykankakee-il.gov](mailto:jehumble@citykankakee-il.gov)

***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

**Reducing the Risk of Arson during Arson Awareness Week 2020**

**Kankakee, IL** – Arson is the second leading cause of fire-deaths in the U.S. according to the United States Fire Administration. This week marks Arson Awareness Week from May 3 – May 9. To raise more awareness, the Office of the Illinois State Fire Marshal (OSFM) is sharing tips on how to reduce the risk.

“Arson can have devastating effects on life and property. We all play a part in keeping our community safe,” said Fire Chief Damon Schuldt.

According to the United States Fire Administration, an estimated 210,300 fires are intentionally set each year. Losses resulting from these fires included approximately 375 civilian deaths, 1,300 civilian injuries, and \$1 billion in direct property damage.

These actions can help reduce the risk:

- Keep leaves, firewood, overgrown brush and shrubbery and other combustibles away from buildings.
- Keep doors and windows locked when a building is unoccupied. Board up abandoned buildings. Do not use double cylinder deadbolt locks without keeping a key nearby, bars without quick release mechanisms, or other security provisions that could trap a person in a building with a deadly fire.
- Store all flammable liquids such as; paints, gasoline, and mowers in an approved storage location: locked cabinets, locked storage units, and locked garages (prevent access to kids). Also, keep away from heat sources such as furnaces and any type of heaters.
- Report suspicious activity near houses or other buildings to the local police and support Neighborhood Watch programs.

- If you suspect a child is setting fires, notify the proper authorities. Keep matches and lighters out of reach and out of sight of young children.
- If you know or suspect that an arson crime has been committed, contact your local fire or police department.

“Reporting a fire saves lives and any additional damage. Raising awareness is very important to help reduce the risk of arson and we encourage everyone to report a fire right away,” said Mayor Wells-Armstrong.

Those who suspect a suspicious fire are encouraged to call the statewide arson hotline at 1 (800) 252-2947. For more information about arson prevention and the OSFM Arson Division, visit [www.sfm.illinois.gov](http://www.sfm.illinois.gov).

# # #

The City of Kankakee is dedicated to protecting, building and nurturing the community while enhancing lives. We are a historic, vibrant, and active riverfront community. We continue to transform into an extraordinary place to dream, grow, and thrive. Embracing our diversity, we strive to be progressive, inclusive, and innovative. For more information on the City of Kankakee, please visit the website at [www.citykankakee-il.gov](http://www.citykankakee-il.gov).